

2013 *ShapingNJ* Partnership Assessment Executive Summary

Since 2008, the New Jersey Office of Nutrition & Fitness (ONF) created and coordinated the ***ShapingNJ*** partnership. This statewide public/private partnership focuses on making it easier for New Jersey residents to eat healthfully and be active in the places where they live, learn, work, and play. ***ShapingNJ*** consists of more than 230 organizations that span a range of sectors including public, private, philanthropic, not-for-profit, health, education, economic development, and transportation. ONF conducted an assessment of ***ShapingNJ*** to examine how the partnership is functioning, to identify areas of strength and to determine areas in need of improvement.

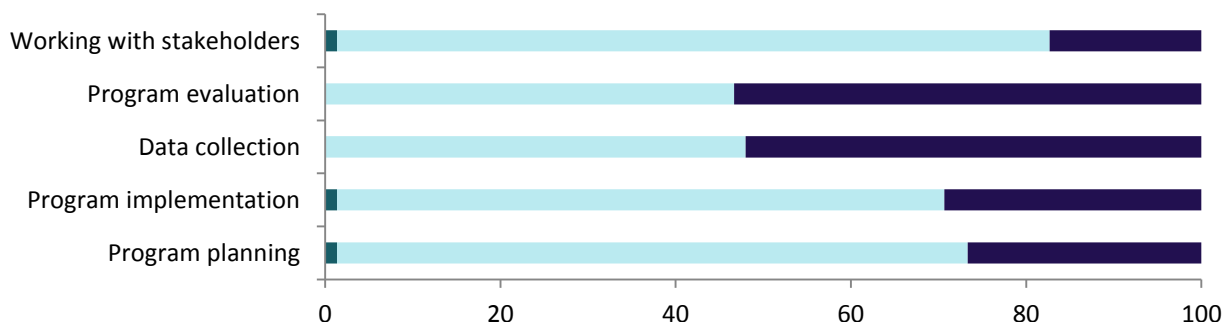
KEY RESULTS

The Impact of Participating in *ShapingNJ*

- 64% of ***ShapingNJ*** respondents implemented at least one ***ShapingNJ*** strategy.
- The most frequently supported ***ShapingNJ*** strategies were:
 - Providing healthy food and beverage options at organization-sponsored meetings and events (64%)
 - Supporting or establishing school policies that provide healthy food and beverage options during school events (57%)
 - Providing training, offering support or instituting best practices in child care centers around nutrition (51%)
- 77% of respondents indicated that participating in ***ShapingNJ*** helped their organization's obesity prevention work.
- Participating in ***ShapingNJ*** benefited partners work in:
 - Working with stakeholders (81%)
 - Program planning (72%)
 - Program implementation (69%) (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Impact of *ShapingNJ* in Partner Organization's Work

■ Disadvantaged our work ■ Benefited our work ■ No impact on our work



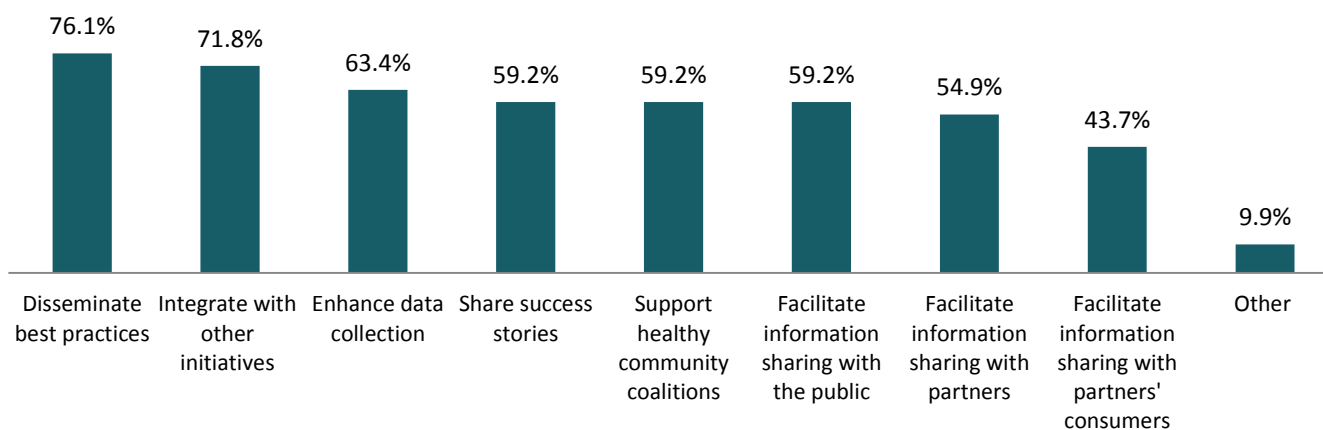
ShapingNJ's Strengths and Areas for Improvement

- Two of the 20 factors known to characterize successful collaborations are strengths for **ShapingNJ**:
 - ShapingNJ** operates in a favorable political and social climate
 - ShapingNJ** has a unique purpose
- One factor is a challenge for **ShapingNJ**:
 - Sufficient funds, staff, materials and time.
- ShapingNJ** has room to improve on the remaining 17 factors which are neither strengths nor weaknesses.
- Executive and Sustainability Committee (E&S) members view the partnership through a slightly different and more positive lens than the partnership as a whole. In 2013,
 - 25% of factors improved from 2011
 - 55% weakened
 - 20% remained the same

Future Areas of Focus for ShapingNJ

- The majority of respondents indicated that **ShapingNJ** should focus its future efforts around communication, coordination and evaluation activities (Figure 2).
- Nearly all respondents (99%) agreed that local action is important
 - to improve health outcomes,
 - for healthier communities and
 - for prevention.
- 97% of respondents agreed that their organization or agency would participate in local action.

Figure 2. Areas of focus for the future



FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NEW JERSEY CONTINUES TO NEED AN OBESITY PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

Evaluation results indicate partners continue to see the need for **ShapingNJ** and its unique purpose. The climate in New Jersey is still ripe for collaborative solutions to combat obesity and its risk factors. There is still work to be done to make the healthy choice, the easy choice.

Recommendations

- **ShapingNJ** should continue to implement strategies to reduce obesity and its risk factors.
- Strategies should target communities with a large proportion of individuals at risk of obesity, based on new data. Work in these local areas should include municipal coalitions and seek to incorporate health in all facets of the community.

SHAPINGNJ PARTNERS ARE MODELING THE WAY TO MAKE THE HEALTHY CHOICE, THE EASY CHOICE

ShapingNJ strategies can be implemented in varying degrees: from small and no or low cost changes that an individual can initiate wherever they are to those that require a more coordinated effort in workplaces, schools, communities, hospitals and other settings. Nearly half of respondents implemented **ShapingNJ** strategies over the past four years. **ShapingNJ** partners are also working in their communities to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Almost half of respondents already participate and nearly all are interested in participating in municipal coalitions that work to make healthy changes in the community.

Recommendations

- **ShapingNJ** should develop, distribute and market toolkits and guides for implementing **ShapingNJ** strategies and best practices. These toolkits should provide action steps that all partners can complete as part of their everyday work.
- **ShapingNJ** should focus on local action to implement **ShapingNJ** strategies in communities that are at high risk for poor health outcomes. Toolkits should be paired with technical assistance and training to build capacity and increase expertise in policy and environmental change activities in communities.

SHAPINGNJ MAY BE MORE THAN A PARTNERSHIP

The 2013 assessment findings suggest differences between partners who are E&S committee members and other partners. E&S members perceive **ShapingNJ's** communication, membership, the process and structure of the partnership slightly more favorably than other partners. They also see improvement in more areas than other partners. These differences are likely due to more frequent opportunities and structures in place for E&S to facilitate collaboration and communication than other partners.

Members of E&S are particularly active in partnership efforts. Members represent partner organizations who are specifically implementing state plan strategies and those that lead statewide efforts linked to obesity prevention and health promotion. This subset of partners convenes regularly to discuss initiatives, potential areas of collaboration, and plan strategically for future efforts. They also participate in providing technical

assistance to, planning for or implementing various grant programs. These activities parallel those seen in traditional partnerships.

The number and type of partners included in **ShapingNJ** expanded over the past four years. Not all of these partners are able to implement the strategies nor do they participate in E&S. For these partners, **ShapingNJ** asks that they support the strategies through advocacy efforts or information sharing via social media, the **ShapingNJ** webpage or the newsletter. There are fewer opportunities and structures in place for these partners to facilitate collaboration and contribution to **ShapingNJ** than for partners on the E&S committee. These characteristics are more closely aligned with a broader type of collective action.

Recommendations

- ONF must adjust methods to assess **ShapingNJ**. The Wilder Collaboration Factor Inventory is only appropriate for measuring partnerships and should be considered to track the functioning of E&S.
- Additional metrics should be researched and identified to assess the impact of **ShapingNJ** beyond E&S. These methods should incorporate an assessment of social media and other electronic information sharing sources because ONF is replacing the newsletter with increased social media posting and sharing.
- Staff coordinating **ShapingNJ** should re-align efforts and resources to reflect the foci identified by survey respondents and to accommodate the growth of **ShapingNJ**. This re-alignment might organize activities based on the type of partner:
 - 1) Information sharing among all **ShapingNJ** partners
 - 2) Coordination, information sharing and evaluation among partners specifically implementing the strategies (i.e. E&S member and implementing partners)
- **ShapingNJ** should continue to provide opportunities for all **ShapingNJ** partners to share information about initiatives in-person and virtually. Facilitating repeat and multi-format venues to exchange information is important to identify and maximize linkages across initiatives in **ShapingNJ**.

METHODS

The 2013 **ShapingNJ** partnership assessment included the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory and a Supplemental Inventory.

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory measures 20 factors associated with successful collaborations¹. These factors are organized into six categories: Environment, Membership Characteristics, Process and Structures, Communication, Purpose, and Resources.

The Supplemental Inventory was collaboratively developed with the Executive & Sustainability Committee (E&S). It included questions about the benefits of participating in **ShapingNJ** and the areas on which **ShapingNJ** should focus future efforts.

The final instrument was 56 questions and ONF used Survey Monkey Pro to program and administer the survey.